

## THE LAST JAPANESE SOLDIER TO EMERGE FROM THE JUNGLE

on the first day of class,  
the sixty-ish professor says,  
"it is sad to note that our  
anthology of american literature  
includes 70 male authors, and  
only 18 female."

"why sad?" a sweet young thing,  
a poster child for the '80s,  
sincerely asks from front row,  
center, "after all, men are more  
widely published, more widely read."

there is no general groaning. the  
professor is surprised to find himself  
on the beach surrounded by foreigners.  
his brows lift, as if someone had snuffed  
out the one candle when he wasn't looking.  
his eyes are having a hard time adjusting  
to the darkness, so i light a match and  
ask sleeping beauty just exactly how did  
she think things got that way.

"why, talent, of course," she declares,

and the match fizzles in my fingers,  
without lighting anything.

### ARETHA, RODNEY, AND ME

two days after my graduation,  
my mother is having a luncheon for two  
old friends who just arrived from new york,  
and i go over to pay my respects.  
"i was just telling the girls about  
your graduating with ... something ...  
what was it again?"

a week after, my husband is writing  
to his father in pittsburgh and raises his head  
to ask, "what was your degree in again?"

three weeks after, my brother is visiting  
from nevada, and my husband shows him  
the letter from the dean. the two  
of them get a giggle out of  
the misspelling of "distinction,"  
the only comment that is made.

four weeks after, my sister calls from  
virginia to say, "it only took you

eighteen years," followed by a three-thousand-mile-long laugh.

and just now, five weeks and two days after, my thirteen-year-old walks into the kitchen where i am typing and asks, "why do you write all day if you don't have school?"

"because i am a writer," i answer.

"what do you write about?"

"well, my feelings ..."

"oh, jeez," she says, "why don't you get a job?"

#### NOT QUITE MAKING THE GRADE

i took the course entitled "female sexuality" because it was only a one-day seminar for one credit, and i needed one credit. also, being a wife and mother, i figured easy 'A.'

the professor was big on audio-visual aids. we were treated to six films of graphic sex between members of the opposite sex, members of the same sex, a man with his own member, and a woman with herself, with techniques and positions never mentioned in health class at our queen of the holy rosary academy.

to say it was a stimulating experience is an understatement of orgasmic proportions.

when i got home that night, i literally could not resist showing my husband what i learned in school that day.

afterwards he said, "that was some course you took. i wonder what it would have been like if it had been for three credits."

-- Mary Ellen Barnes

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